



COUNTY OF KAUAI

News Release

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Mayor returns from goodwill tour of Japan

LĪHU'E – Mayor Bernard Carvalho, Jr. returned Sunday from a weeklong goodwill tour of two cities in Japan, Moriyama and Suo-Oshima, with stops in Kyoto and Hiroshima.

The primary purpose of his visit was to explore economic development opportunities, while strengthening Kaua'i's sister city programs, engaging in discussions with other mayors, interacting with citizens of all ages as well as promoting tourism.

"I think it's important for us to stay connected with the towns that many Kaua'i families are from originally and to share our culture, music, education and business opportunities," said Mayor Carvalho.

In Moriyama, the mayor visited a farmer's market managed by Japan's Agricultural agency where approximately 580 farmers offer locally grown fruits and vegetables and value-added products.

"It's similar to our Sunshine markets, but on a much larger scale," said Mayor Carvalho. "It was interesting to hear their perspective on the financial aspect of farming."

During his meetings with the mayors of Kaua'i's sister cities Moriyama and Suo-Oshima, they covered transportation related topics such as driverless cars, shared use roadways, bicycle hubs and areas for bike repairs.

The mayors also talked about some areas of mutual interest including health and wellness, outdoor spaces for reflection and recreation, and taking care of their residents' needs in general.

In addition, a discussion on strengthening ties between the Suo-Oshima and Iwakuni marathons with The Kaua'i Marathon took place.

Another government official who Mayor Carvalho met in Moriyama was the Minister of Sports. They shared ideas about the Kaua'i International Youth Baseball Tournament, which is planned for next year.

"We're looking forward to the city of Moriyama sending a number of teams to Kaua'i to play in goodwill games with our teams," said the mayor.

Like Americans, the Japanese value historical buildings and cultural resources, and preserving and restoring them is a priority.

"We took part in a traditional tea ceremony in the historic Urasenke Home, which is scheduled for renovation and conversion to a visitor attraction by the local government. Our host was the grand tea master of the Urasenke line," the mayor said.

In both Moriyama and Suo-Oshima, formal receptions and tree planting ceremonies were held to celebrate the town's sister city program with Kaua'i.

This special relationship shared between Suo-Oshima and Kaua'i is clearly shown at the Nagaura Green Stay Sports and Recreational Facility where replicas of Kaua'i's Historic County Building and the Daniel K. Inouye Kīlauea Point Lighthouse were built.

The mayor also spent a fair amount of time with school age children and their teachers, learning about student exchange programs and resources that can be shared between the two countries, along with the curriculum that is used at the different levels.

"Some great relationships between our schools have already been established like the one between Suo-Oshima and Kaua'i High School where the students communicate via Skype and video teleconference", said the mayor. "The Kaua'i High Band also has a strong partnership with their counterparts at Kyoto Tachibana High School. Every time the band comes here, they do a concert and the proceeds are donated to the Kaua'i High School Band Boosters."

The mayor noted that he would like to explore the possibility of helping to initiate more student exchanges.

At one of the schools, posters that depict the Aloha spirit were on display.

“It was endearing how the children embrace the Hawaiian culture at an early age,” said the mayor. “Everywhere we went, the people enjoyed the music and dance that we shared with them.”

A place that the mayor visited that shows a strong connection between the Aloha state and the Land of the Rising Sun is the Museum of Japanese Emigration to Hawai‘i. A registry, along with photos of those who made the arduous journey to Hawai‘i and their contributions to both countries with their hard-earned wages, can be found there.

Mayor Carvalho was particularly touched while visiting the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park.

“We sang a song as a peace offering in memory of everyone who lost their lives due to the atomic bomb that was dropped there in 1945,” said the mayor, noting that 220,000 people died from the blast or from radiation exposure.

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